

alibis and there is no direct evidence linking them to the crime, apart from a confession extracted under duress. Following an international campaign the men were released in late 2008. But on 27 December 2012, the Appeal Court upheld the original verdict and sent them back to prison. No new evidence was heard. Amnesty believes the guilty parties have not been brought to justice and that the two men are being unjustly held.

- **Amnesty's Priorities for 2013/14**

- *Women's Rights in Afghanistan* – Amnesty continues to make girls and women's rights a fundamental campaign aim this year, lobbying the UK government to put pressure on the Afghan authorities to ensure the rights women have won are not lost after allied forces withdraw
- *Zimbabwe elections* – continue international pressure and solidarity to ensure the Zimbabwe elections scheduled for the end of July are free from violence and intimidation
- *Individual at Risk* – people taking action on behalf of the many voiceless others, imprisoned, tortured, held in detention without trial, 'disappeared', or facing the death penalty. Freedom of expression and the death penalty will be key foci.

Death Penalty News: the USA

Last month, **Kimberly McCarthy** became the **500th person put to death** in Texas, since executions resumed in 1977. This ignominious statistic puts Texas head and shoulders above any other state, responsible for 500 of the 1,338 executions carried out in the USA since the Supreme Court approved new capital statutes in 1976. Kimberly had had her conviction quashed in 2001 for a homicide carried out in 1997 however she was re-tried in 2002 and sentenced to death. New evidence citing racial discrimination was not allowed. **Herman Wallace** and **Albert Woodfox** have spent 41 years in solitary confinement in Louisiana enduring "a nightmare that no human being should ever have to endure", they are widely known as 'the Angola 3', the third member having been released on appeal. Serious doubts have been raised regarding their conviction however the state Attorney General has successfully thwarted the convictions being overturned. Albert and Herman reveal the dark side of the US prison system, spending 23 hours of every day for the past 41 years in solitary confinement. We sent cards and messages of hope to the two individuals. The Governor of **Florida** disappointingly signed into law a controversial new proposal that will make it quicker and easier to execute prisoners held on death row. There have been 18 executions in the US this year so far.



Death Penalty: Vietnam

We signed letters to the Minister of Public Security following changes in the law that make it likely that a mass execution of 117 death row prisoners will take place imminently. Vietnam has had to postpone executions since January 2012 following the EU ban on the export of drugs used in execution by lethal injection. However the Vietnamese authorities plan to get around this by manufacturing the drugs 'in country' and the Ministry has said that 117 executions will be carried out immediately following the change in law.



*At the time of writing it is unclear when the much anticipated elections in **Zimbabwe** will take place, although the end of July is still being mooted. We signed cards to the President of Tanzania asking him to use his position in the South African Development Community to deploy observers and human rights monitors. At the last vote four years ago, over 200 people were killed, 10,000 injured and up to 28,000 displaced.*

Present on 9th July: Neville White, David Howkins, Shirley Henderson, Joan Williams, Waltraut Gilchrist, Patsy Paine, Margaret Coppard, Wendy Simmons, Ted Burke, Gladys Edmonds, Eve Fisher, Simon Nash, Peter Martin. Mr and Mrs O Clarke were welcomed to the meeting. Apologies: Eleanor Ivens, Vivien Glanz, Chris Purnell.

Meetings are held in the Wesley Room, Orpington Methodist Church, Sevenoaks Road, Orpington commencing at 7.30pm. **E-mail** aibromley@btinternet.com **website:** www.amnesty.org.uk/bromley

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